



Hot Springs, Battlefields, and a Wedding 1915—16

Finally, at the end of November 1915, Mather and I were able to get away from Washington for the long-planned inspection of Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas. Included in the party that finally reached Hot Springs were Mather, his wife, and various friends and business associates.

I was part of the welcoming committee from the Business Men's League when they met the Mather party as their train pulled into the Missouri Pacific Station in Hot Springs on a warm, cloudless November 29. From the station the party was taken to the Arlington Hotel in old-fashioned, open horse-drawn carriages.

The Arlington Hotel was on Central Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the city, a broad, shaded street lined with elaborate bath houses on one side and imposing hotels everywhere else. The Arlington was the largest and most luxurious of these. It was a magnificent multistoried, Italianate-style conglomeration of soaring twin towers with an arched portico around the base and a roof garden on top. Inside, it sported every luxury imaginable—various dining areas, a swimming pool, massage parlors, and a ballroom. All was marble with stained glass, intricate iron works, and tiled floors. A few years after our visit, it burned down, only to be replaced by an even larger and more grandiose Arlington.

After refreshing ourselves in our rooms, everyone gathered for a lovely luncheon. Then the ladies excused themselves while Mather's male group, plus local park officials and businessmen, went on a tour of Hot

Springs. It took six carriages to accommodate us all. This was the first visit for both Mather and me, and we were quite impressed. In fact, it became one of Mather's favorite spots, to which he retreated when things got too stressful.

Hot Springs had been the first *reservation* area set aside by the federal government, in 1832, thirty-two years before Yosemite and forty years before Yellowstone. It did not actually become a *national park* until 1921, and somehow it never seemed like a national park. In 1915 it was a small city of about twelve thousand people nestled in a narrow valley surrounded by heavily forested hills of the Ozark Mountains. About fifty miles away, but still hovering over it, was Hot Springs Mountain, from whose sides the hot mineral waters flowed down into town. These radium, silicon, and other mineral-laden waters poured forth from forty-six springs at an average temperature of 135 degrees. They were channeled into bath houses and other facilities, all of which were under the supervision of the Department of the Interior, which performed inspections and set rates. There was additional land in the reservation outside the city—mountainous country, a lake, and some streams for fishing.

Mather was eagerly looking forward to experiencing the full treatment at one of the marble palaces on "Bathhouse Row." We were informed that we had to have a physician check us out before we could go. Again the federal government was omnipresent, as all physicians had to be passed by a local federal board. When we appeared at the appointed physician's office, we were handed a circular, which stated:

Relief may be reasonably expected at the Hot Springs in the following conditions: In various forms of gout and rheumatism; neuralgia, especially when depending on gout; metallic or malarial poisoning, paralysis not of organic origin, the earlier stages of locomotor ataxia, chronic Bright's disease and other diseases of the urinary organs, functional diseases of the liver, gastric dyspepsia not of organic origin, chronic diarrhea, catarrhal affections of the digestive and respiratory tracts, chronic skin diseases, especially the squamous varieties, and chronic conditions due to malarial infection.

This was signed by the surgeon-general of the U.S. Army and the secretary of war.

Furthermore, we were informed that the Interior Department had employed the world-renowned authority on radium Professor Bertram B. Boltwood of Yale University to make exhaustive tests on the water. He

reported, among other things, that "the waters of the Arkansas Hot Springs are radio-active to a marked degree. And the radiation from radium and its disintegration products produces an ionization of the atoms of whatever substance the rays penetrate. Chemical effects follow the ionization."

Well, Mather and I felt we were not only going to see the wonders of the bath house but to experience a fountain of youth. So off we went to the finest one in town, the Fordyce Bath House, adjoining the "Grand Entrance to the Government Reservation," a gateway of stone pillars topped by eagles.

We were stunned by the splendor. According to its brochure, Fordyce was a spectacular three-story "Spanish Renaissance building of soft, ivory-glazed terra cotta, combined with tapestry brick." Inside, the walls were of veined marble with pink marble staircases, mosaic tile floors, flowing fountains (one of Hernando De Soto receiving a drink from an Indian girl), and an art nouveau dome made of eight thousand pieces of glass depicting Neptune's daughter and playmates.

We were stripped, wrapped in robes, and escorted to the thermo room for a hot "bake" on a porcelain cot. After that, I'm not sure in what order we were "treated." There was a Turkish hot room, a needle and shower room, a pack room with rows of porcelain cots to recuperate on, and a cooling room. There was a hydro-therapeutic room, where they tried to tempt us to use the sun-ray cabinets, frigid cabinets, spray machines, and Sitzbaths (later I found these were mainly for visitors who had syphilis).

We thought we were through when we completed the tour of the first floor, but we had hardly started. We went up the marble staircase to the second floor and a very short stay in the mechano-therapy department, where we tried out some of what the brochure called "scientific wonders, every conceivable mechanical device and ingenious 'Zander-gymnastic' equipment—artificial rowing & horseback, vibrators, etc."

On the third floor we gave only a passing glance to one of the twenty-two "private staterooms" (eight by twelve feet with maid and valet service), the gymnasium (punching bags, vaulting horses, trapeze), the luxurious assembly hall spanning the entire front of the building, with the gentlemen's parlor and billiard room at one end, the ladies' parlor, beauty shop, and music room at the opposite end. A magnificent lighted roofgarden topped the building, where tables, benches, and couches were profusely scattered, so that a visitor could enjoy refreshments and the panorama of the city and the Ozarks, day or night.

Mather and I were almost worn out from all this inspection. Not just from trying all the waters and sports activities but from laughing so much. Every new bath or drink of that awful mineral water set us both off into gales of laughter. Staggering out of the great pool onto a wide marble bench, he gasped, "Horace, how much more of this can we take?" Before I could answer, our tour guide suggested that we follow him and try the "vapor experience," so down to the first-floor bath rooms we went. Here were deep tubs with very hot water—a very pleasant and relaxing experience. Then up to the massage room for the highlight of our visit—a long, remarkable rubdown and, for me at least, a short catnap.

The rest of our time in Hot Springs was most enjoyable. There was a lavish banquet in honor of Mr. Mather at the Arlington Hotel on the night of November 30, hosted by the Business Men's League. Someone had rounded up three of the finest chefs in town to prepare an elaborate menu. Not wanting to appear stupid or ignorant, I ate every exotic bite, even the Rockaways and Snowbird, without knowing what either was. I still don't know.

In between social activities and department business, everyone enjoyed hours of rest and more adventures in the bath houses. Mather became almost addicted to them. Several times when no one could find him, I went to Bath House Row and checked each place until I located him. Usually he turned up at his favorite, the Fordyce, always in the waters or getting a massage. I had the last page from the Fordyce brochure framed and sent it to Mather for Christmas. It was a drawing of an old wheelchair covered with cobwebs and underneath was printed "Permanently Interred." I pasted a picture of Mather on it as though he was the one in the wheelchair.

Up at dawn on December 3, Mather and I joined some local people for a horseback trip to Ozark-Lithia Springs. We had breakfast there and exchanged horses for automobiles to visit Mountain Valley. It was a beautiful ride up and back through the lush forests. Returning to Ozark, we mounted our horses once more and rode back to Hot Springs.

I barely had time to wash up, change clothes, grab my suitcase and my typewriter, and race off to the depot, as my train for Washington left at 2:30 P.M. Mr. and Mrs. Mather and their party didn't leave for Chicago until 5:50 P.M. Naturally a full contingent of the local press heard and reported Mather's farewell comments. But imagine my surprise when the *Hot Springs New Era* included a few pearls of wisdom from "Mr. Mather's Secretary, Harry M. Albright."

I took the long way around to get back to Washington, traveling via Memphis and Chattanooga. With my love of history, I couldn't pass up the first War Department battlefield park. As soon as I got off the train in Chattanooga, I spent twenty-five cents for *Book of Battles: Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge*. It stands out as the most complete guidebook I ever had.

It was early in the morning, so I spent the entire day following that guidebook, riding streetcars along the flatlands and a horse-drawn buggy to the top of Lookout Mountain, but mainly on foot. Twice self-appointed guides, both Confederate veterans, showed me around. Neither had been in these battles, but they were very knowledgeable because they had put in long years of fighting. One had served with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and had been at Appomattox. The other was in Joseph Johnston's army when Sherman was marching through Georgia.

It was a fascinating experience. I never forgot that day, as I'm sure it marked the germination of my plan to get battlefields and other historic places into the future national park system. When I was traveling toward Washington that night, I got out my typewriter, wrote Mr. Mather about my visit to Chattanooga, and told him my thoughts about getting these battlefields away from the War Department. I didn't say too much, but I did mention that I felt other types of historic areas should also be included under our projected bureau.

It seemed rather revolutionary, but I was really fired up. Just one quote from this shows my youth and inexperience, but also my determination when I set out to do something. "Why should a military department be in charge of lands which are predominantly an attraction for all the people? It seems to me that our new bureau ought to be concerned with all areas the Federal Government wishes to preserve and protect for the education, interest and enjoyment of the population. I guess you think I am grasping at too large a concept, but I have real determination to plunge into this thing with the War Department if you are in agreement and I have some spare time in Washington."

Back at the Interior Department for about ten days, I quickly cleared up all correspondence and minor problems that had accumulated while I was in Arkansas. The only thing of real importance was assuring that all loose ends were tied up regarding the completion of Mark Daniels's work. He was officially out of the Interior Department on December 10, 1915.

Then my only other concern was to find a nice but inexpensive jewelry store and buy a wedding ring. The night before I was to leave, the

Adolph Millers had me over for dinner and gave me a beautiful cut-glass lemonade pitcher and glasses as a wedding gift to take to Grace.

Washington was almost deserted for the holidays, so I managed to get away to California on December 15. In Chicago Mather's chauffeur met me at the train and took me to the Prairie Club, where Mather and I had lunch and spent a few hours discussing the latest news. I brought him all the paperwork that seemed important, my twenty-one-page report on our trip to Hot Springs, as well as a summation of recommendations for its improvement.

Then on across the country for the third time this year. And quite a trip it was—a raging blizzard most of the way. At Cheyenne I remember our Pacific Limited was covered with ice, and the Pullman doors had to be chopped free to let passengers get off.

But at 8:40 A.M. on December 19 the California sun was shining brilliantly as I arrived in Oakland and saw my Grace running down the platform and into my arms. Three days of fun, excitement, partying, and opening gifts concluded with the happiest day of my life—my wedding to Grace Marian Elizabeth Noble.

We were married at the First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley on the bleak, foggy night of December 23, 1915. The bride was late because the dressmaker bringing her veil crashed into a fire hydrant in the dense fog and Grace's mother suddenly decided her wedding dress wasn't "modest" enough. So a lace insert had to be added at the neckline. Minister Lapsley McAfee concluded the lovely ceremony with words we always obeyed: "Be lovers always." A party at the Noble home on Ellsworth Street followed the ceremony. My old granddad was late, as he got lost in the fog, drove off the road, and plowed through a fence into a barn. This wasn't the only catastrophe for the evening. When Grace and I were ready to leave on our honeymoon, my dad tripped on the leg of a table loaded with food and upended it all over my new father-in-law.

We newlyweds took a taxi to the Hotel Oakland for our wedding night. Grace always loved to tell the story that, when I locked the door of our room, she took one horrified look at me, panicked, fled to the bathroom crying, and threw up. As she said, "When he turned that bolt, my stomach turned with it." She added that she sat in the bathroom wondering who this man was that she had married, having only seen him a few dozen times in her life. Well, all ended well, as she said she never felt that way again. And years later, on our sixty-third wedding anniversary, I was taped as saying, "When the Golden Anniversary arrives, it's the husband who cries."

The festive Christmas season united Albrights and Nobles but ended all too soon. A telegram from Mather summoned me back to Washington, instructing me to return by way of Grand Canyon. On December 31, 1915, we newlyweds boarded a train for Los Angeles, then headed east on the Santa Fe Railroad's Navajo. This was Grace's first trip across the country, a wondrous experience. At Williams, Arizona, we transferred to another train for the run to the park and late in the morning of January 2, 1916, checked into El Tovar.

El Tovar was a low, rambling, rustic-style building, built of local rock and pine logs, and perched on the very edge of the great canyon. It was owned and operated by the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey Company. Three hundred visitors could enjoy steam heat and electric lights, a solarium, lounges upstairs and down, a beautiful dining room serving the renowned Harvey food, and luxurious rooms looking out over the canyon.

We were met by the only official of the federal government, Forest Service Ranger Claude Way. Grand Canyon Forest Reserve had been established in 1893 and made a national monument in 1908, but was kept in the Department of Agriculture until made a national park in 1919. So I had no jurisdiction or even a right to make an inspection of the area. But Mather and I already regarded Grand Canyon as ours.

Mrs. Way was waiting for us at El Tovar, reserving the best table in the dining room. She was a fascinating person, beautiful, with a vivacious personality, and full of entertaining stories of the times she had spent as a trick rider with Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

After we had enjoyed a fine breakfast, I was anxious to get on with my appointed job of inspection, as we were only going to be here a short time. Mrs. Way had thoughtfully brought along all the winter equipment the Albrights might need to hike to the Way cabin. It was a beautiful, clear day, sharply cold, but not unpleasant. We four took our time walking along the canyon rim to let Grace get her first view of its splendor.

For Way and myself, it was a careful examination of mining claims along some of the choice sections of the rim. I was angry and depressed at the problem, knowing that these inholdings were damaging our attempts to have the Grand Canyon changed to a national park. The mining situation also didn't help with our scheme to "rob" the Forest Service, not only of the canyon but also of Kaibab lands on the north rim to enlarge our future park. Although Way was in the Forest Service, he was our kind of park conservationist, sympathized with our plans, and asked me outright to consider him as park supervisor if the service was created and, eventually, the Grand Canyon was brought under it.

The ladies had been patient through all this, but were now beginning to freeze, so we cut back through the forest toward the Way cabin, three miles of difficult terrain. By the time we reached it, dark clouds and a rising wind had sprung up. Soon it was snowing heavily. We were forced to stay indoors and even spend the night, for it was impossible to return to the hotel. That was sad, for Ford Harvey had left instructions for us to be extended complimentary accommodations and meals.

The next morning we woke to a brilliant blue sky and mounds of new snow. Grace was dressed and outside playing in it before I could even shave. When I joined her, she was like a child, laughing and shouting while we had a great snowball fight and a duel with three-foot-long icicles. There was much picture taking. A horse and an outfit (Mrs. Way's fancy showgirl clothes) were produced for her to climb aboard for her first picture as a western cowgirl.

Our day was spent with the Ways on a sightseeing and inspection trip by sleigh around the "Rim Drive." We stopped over at Hermit's Rest, a remarkable building designed by Mary Colter. It appeared to be an almost haphazard pile of rocks, merging into the landscape, with a stone deck extending to the very edge of the canyon. Inside, the building was a large open area with a vaulted ceiling and glass windows facing the canyon. We sat before the immense, arched rock fireplace, with the huge blazing logs quickly thawing us out while we had tea and cakes and drank in the splendor of the view. Grace was fascinated by the place and had the Ways take pictures of us inside by the hearth and outside seated on furniture made of tree stumps.

We had a hard time pulling ourselves away from this beautiful and charming place, but time was getting short. At last we were able to enjoy our lovely room at El Tovar, overlooking the canyon, while we washed and changed clothes. Then we again joined the Ways and had a notable dinner, but unfortunately we couldn't even sample all the delicious food. Our train was about to pull out for Williams at 7:45 P.M. There the Pullman connected to the eastbound California Limited, the most deluxe of the Santa Fe line.

As nice as the Navajo had been, this California Limited was positively elegant. This was a through-travel-only train. Local passengers were not carried. It was strictly first-class. Green upholstery was used with koko, mahogany, and satinwood interior finish. Dining was not the same on all Santa Fe Railroad trains. Most lesser-fare trains were served with dining cars east of Kansas City, dining rooms west. The latter were usually

in splendid hotels along the way at Albuquerque, Gallup, and other stops. Our sumptuous dining car was a through car and had linen, silver, and cut glass, ferns, and ceiling fans (to remove all kitchen odors). There was a whole car devoted to the gentlemen—a smoking and reading room, a barbershop, a porter to press clothes, and daily papers to keep up with the stock market. Of course, the ladies were unable to enjoy it—no women allowed.

Now comes the tale my beloved wife told about me for years to come. After breakfast the next morning, I bundled my bride in the warmest clothes she had, wrapped her in a train blanket, and seated her on a carpet-covered wicker camp chair on the rear platform of the observation car. As we headed across Arizona and New Mexico, it began to snow again. Besides the snow and soot from the coal-burning engine, there was a wind chill factor about forty degrees below zero.

From Bob Marshall I had acquired a fine United States Geological Survey guidebook, a description of the rail trip from Chicago to California. There were some problems about the book. It was written for someone going from east to west, and the Albrights were going from west to east. And another thing: it was written by geologists for geologists. Information other than about rocks was rather limited. While my bride almost froze to death, I stood up and read the book aloud, on and on, from back to front. There were endless pages like: "About 4 miles west of Newton is an area of sand and gravels which fill a broad, moderately deep underground valley in shale, excavated by a large stream that long ago flowed across the region from the north and finally deposited the gravel and sand."

As usual, Grace was a real trooper and never complained. Not then, at least. Recalling this honeymoon ride sixty-three years later, she remarked: "It was my first lesson in sightseeing with Horace Albright. He never missed one detail, and he's never missed one since."

The Albrights arrived in Chicago at 11:15 A.M. on Thursday the sixth. I guess Grace was never so glad in her life to reach civilization and distance herself from my little red book. It was my twenty-sixth birthday, so we celebrated with lunch in the Tea Room on the seventh floor of Marshall Field's elegant department store. The Choralcelo (Celestial Choir) performed every day from noon to 2:30 P.M.

On January 7 at 11:40 A.M., we boarded the Chesapeake and Ohio train for Washington, arriving there about 5:00 P.M. the next day. Somehow I had forgotten that, being married, I would have to find a new

place to live. All-male quarters would no longer do. It was too late in the day to do anything about it, but the Robert Marshalls came to our rescue and kindly took us in until the twelfth. We began apartment-hunting immediately.

Grace and I rented rooms and ate our meals at a boarding house, but Grace and the landlady took a dislike to each other at once. The woman was a "deep southerner," and Grace overheard a reference to the new boarders as "damn Yankees." Grace then started singing "Marching through Georgia" and other offensive Civil War songs. On March 13, however, we moved to an apartment of our own, the Lonsdale, at 238 California Street.

These early months of 1916 were exciting for both of us. As Mrs. Mather lived in Chicago and only visited occasionally in Washington, Mr. Mather lived alone at the Cosmos Club. He loved to have people around him all the time, so he had us accompany him to elegant dinners, to the theater, and to some of his official functions. Grace acted as his hostess. He paid for everything, wouldn't let us spend a nickel. We truly enjoyed his company and his choice of entertainment. Of course, many an evening after dinner I took Grace home and went back to the Cosmos Club, where Mather and I worked until after midnight.

If we weren't with Mather, we were being entertained elsewhere. It was a real social whirl with the Yards, Marshalls, and other acquaintances from the Interior Department and friends from the University of California. There were dinners, the theater, and dancing at the Willard. Delightful, memorable events.

One in particular stands out. On Tuesday, March 7, 1916, the National Geographic Society gave its annual banquet on the tenth floor of the Willard Hotel. It honored Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone and the father-in-law of Gilbert Grosvenor.

As Grace and I entered the ballroom, crowded with hundreds of people, we were greeted by a choral group loudly singing "Here Comes the Bride." The chorus consisted of Gilbert Grosvenor, Alexander Graham Bell, Stephen Mather, and Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane. Then came thunderous clapping and cheers from the assembled guests. Grace smiled radiantly and graciously bowed her head while I choked up with pride, thinking, "She is the most beautiful woman in the room and everyone knows it."